NCA
VOC FOR IOP/FN
BACKGROUNDER NO. 1-9977 JANUARY 16, 1976
RUSSELL DYBVIK

THE COMMON MARKET -- REASSESSING THE FUTURE

ANNCR:

THE EUROPEAN COMMON MARKET FACES SOME CRUCIAL POLITICAL DECISIONS IN NINETEEN SEVENTY-SIX -- AS THE COMMUNITY REASSESSES ITS FUTURE. RUSSELL DYBVIK HAS THIS BACKGROUND REPORT:

VOICE:

ECONOMICALLY, NINETEEN SEVENTY-FIVE WAS N O T A VINTAGE YEAR FOR EUROPE. UNEMPLOYMENT SOARED FORTY PERCENT -- WITH MORE THAN ONE MILLION JOBLESS IN BRITAIN, FRANCE AND WEST GERMANY. COMMON MARKET INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION DROPPED SHARPLY -- BUT IT N O W APPEARS EUROPE'S WORST ECONOMIC CRISIS IN THIRTY YEARS IS OVER.

AND THE FOCUS OF EUROPEAN LEADERS IS N O W CHANGING -- TOWARD AN IN-DEPTH DEBATE OF THE COMMON MARKET'S PRIORITIES AND LONG-RANGE GOALS. FORMING THE BASIS FOR THIS REASSESSMENT OF THE FUTURE IS A SOBER AND SEARCHING REPORT PREPARED OVER THE PAST YEAR -- AND JUST MADE PUBLIC BY BELGIAN PREMIER LEO TINDEMANS.

IN IT, MISTER TINDEMANS BLUNTLY WARNS THAT IT IS N O LONGER POSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE THE ORIGINAL GOAL OF EUROPEAN UNION BY NINETEEN EIGHTY.

TOO LITTLE HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED TO DATE, HE SAYS -- AND REALISTIC AND REALIZABLE MEANS MUST BE FOUND FOR IMPROVING THE WAY THE COMMUNITY WORKS. UNLESS THE POLITICAL WILL IS FOUND TO DO THIS, THE BELGIAN PREMIER WARNS -- THE RESULTS OF TWO DECADES OF EUROPEAN

INTEGRATION MAY CRUMBLE.

MISTER TINDEMANS PUTS FORWARD A SERIES OF PROPOSALS THAT EUROPEAN LEADERS WILL BEGIN DEBATING AT THEIR NEXT SUMMIT MEETING IN MARCH. AMONG THEM: THE ABOLITION OF VETO RIGHTS OVER COMMUNITY PROGRAMS BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBER STATES, THE STRENGTHENING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMISSION IN BRUSSELS, AND MORE POWER FOR THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT -- INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO INITIATE COMMUNITY PROGRAMS.

IN WHAT PROMISES TO BE HIS MOST CONTROVERSIAL PROPOSAL -- MISTER TINDEMANS URGES THAT THE STRONGEST COMMUNITY PARTNERS BE ALLOWED TO MOVE AHEAD WITH JOINT ECONOMIC AND MONETARY PLANS, WITH THE ECONOMICALLY WEAKER COUNTRIES CATCHING UP LATER. THIS SUPPORTS AN EARLIER WEST GERMAN SUGGESTION -- BUT CRITICS CLAIM IT WILL LEAD TO CREATION OF SECOND-CLASS COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIP FOR THE WEAKER NATIONS.

MISTER TINDEMANS ALSO CALLS FOR CLOSER COMMUNITY COORDINATION IN THE FOREIGN POLICY FIELD -- ESPECIALLY WITH THE UNITED STATES. AND HE URGES THAT A EUROPEAN REPRESENTATIVE BE SENT TO WASHINGTON TO SEEK A NEW UNDERSTANDING ON THE FORM OF FUTURE ATLANTIC RELATIONS. BUT FOREIGN POLICY HAS LONG BEEN A SENSITIVE TOPIC WITHIN THE COMMUNITY -- AND UNTIL THERE IS A POSITIVE EUROPEAN DECISION TO ADOPT A COMMON FOREIGN POLICY, IT IS EXPECTED THAT RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES WILL CONTINUE TO FOLLOW THEIR PRESENT COURSE. THIS INCLUDES HIGH-LEVEL, SEMI-ANNUAL DISCUSSIONS ON A BROAD RANGE OF TOPICS -- TALKS THAT AMERICAN OFFICIALS STRESS ARE CONSULTATION,

RATHER THAN COORDINATION. AND IT'S N O T CONSIDERED LIKELY THAT A COMMON FOREIGN POLICY WILL GET MUCH IMMEDIATE ATTENTION FROM EUROPEAN LEADERS BECAUSE OF THE URGENCY MISTER TINDEMANS ATTACHES TO SOLVING INTERNAL PROBLEMS.

THE FACT THAT EUROPEAN LEADERS HAVE ADOPTED AN INFORMAL FORMAT FOR THEIR POLICY MEETINGS -- WITH MORE STRAIGHT TALK AND LESS PAPERWORK -- AUGERS WELL AS THE COMMON MARKET BEGINS THE POLITICAL REASSESSMENT OF ITS FUTURE. IT IS A DEBATE THAT WILL BE CLOSELY FOLLOWED BY THE UNITED STATES AND THE REST OF THE WORLD.

-0-

GH/RTD